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PROOFS

OF

FRENCH AGGRESSION;

EXTRACTED FROM AN ANSWER

TO

MR. ERSKINE'S "VIEW OF THE CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR."

BY JOHN BOWLES, ESQ.

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PREFACE.

THE events which have lately taken place in France afford the moſt complete demonſtration, that the continuance of the War is intirely owing to the men who, by the moſt atrocious crimes, have obtained the direction of the affairs of that country, and who no longer attempt to conceal that their object, in continuing the War with ſuch obſtinacy, is nothing leſs than the total deſtruction of Great Britain.

The difficulties which theſe uſurpers have conſtantly thrown in the way of all intercourſe for the purpoſe of negociation—the endeavours they have employed to break it off the moment it has been begun—their pertinacious refuſal to propoſe any terms on which they would conſent to think of Peace—their propoſal in the late conferences at Lille, that we ſhould, without any

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compenſation, ſurrender all the conqueſts we had made from France and her allies, as a prelimenary to negociation, and as a prelude to ſuch other conceſſions as they might have the inſolence to dictate, when we had thus laid ourſelves at their feet, and prevailed on them to explain their ultimate views—and, finally, their abrupt diſmiſſal of his Majeſty's Ambaſſador, becauſe he was not authorized to accede to ſo arrogant a demand—all theſe circumſtances render it impoſſible to deny that the continuance of the War is ſolely to be aſcribed to the Jacobin Directory of France.

The object of theſe enemies to Peace in thus rejecting our repeated overtures for accomodation, cannot, ſurely, be better aſcertained than from their own declarations. In their Proclamation, addreſſed to the French people, and dated November 21, after endeavouring, in their accuſtomed ſtile of falſehood, to deny the moſt notorious facts—after boaſting of their diſpoſition for Peace although they had ſo fully proved their antipathy to it—after vaunting their overtures for pacification, although it is well known that a ſingle overture has never come from them—after daring, with uparallelled effrontery, to cite their "principles with reſpect to other nations," and even to inſult the bitter experience of ſo many ſtates by aſſerting that "the French "Republic does not oppreſs inferior ſtates and "feeble powers; that ſhe does not think of plundering her allies; that ſhe is faithful to her "friends and puniſhes her enemies without hating "them;"

" them ;" after ſuch audacious attempts to impoſe on the credulity of the people groaning under their oppreſſive yoke, they avow their object in continuing the War againſt this country to be " to " dictate terms of Peace at London—to reſtore the " freedom of the ſeas—and to make the Britiſh " Government pay its quota towards the expences " of the War." Theſe terms, ſurely, want no explanation. No one but muſt underſtand them to imply *the annihilation of our Conſtitution—the deſtruction of our commerce, and the pillage of our property*—in ſhort, *the total ruin of the Britiſh people*, whom they are prompted by their implacable hatred, to deſcribe as " the horror of the world;" an epithet which, in juſtice, belongs only to themſelves. They would, doubtleſs, have been ſtill more explicit—and the authors of this proclamation would have endeavoured to animate their banditti by a more glowing deſcription of the ſweets of a deſcent upon England, but ſome reſerve was neceſſary in compliment to thoſe " auxiliaries" thoſe thouſands " of generous men who have long ſtruggled for a " Parliamentary reform," whoſe aid they declare they expect to receive upon their landing in this country. They were apprehenſive, no doubt, of diſguſting or alarming theſe expected " auxiliaries" by too faithful and exact a picture of all the accompaniments and conſequences of the viſit they propoſe to make us.

By placing their reliance on the friends of Parliamentary reform, it is plain that they conſider reform to be but a pretext to conceal and promote

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Revolutionary deſigns. So far I believe they are right. But I cannot help thinking that they would find themſelves diſappointed in their expectations of aid from our reformers or revolutioniſts. That there is a party here who, under colour of reform, ſeek to deſtroy the Conſtitution, there can be no doubt; but it is not at all probable that they would like to ſee the Conſtitution deſtroyed by any but themſelves. It would not at all anſwer their purpoſe to act an under part. And with all their enthuſiaſtic admiration of their gallic friends, it is difficult to believe that they would be ſuch arrant fools as not to fight like Britons, rather than ſee themſelves, their families, and their all, (be it little or much) in the power and at the mercy of Frenchmen, though in the form of Republicans.

It being impoſſible any longer to entertain a doubt reſpecting either the cauſes of the continuance of the War, or the deſtructive deſigns of the enemy, the perverſe and malignant ſons of faction, reſort, as their only remaining reſource, to the old calumny, that the war was unjuſtly entered into by us. They know but too well that there is an honeſt principle in the hearts of Britons, which prevents them, under any change of circumſtances, from feeling comfortably and acting heartily in any cauſe, unleſs they are fully convinced that it was juſt from the beginning. This principle (which is very honourable to the Engliſh character) expoſes them in time of War to the artifices of factious and deſigning men, who, in order to induce them to withdraw their

confidence and ſupport from Government, endeavour to perſuade them that the War was originally unjuſt and unneceſſary. And as the origin of the preſent war has now, by the progreſs of time, been left at the diſtance of nearly five years, whereby the recollection of the details, which diſtinguiſhed its commencement, has been conſiderably weakened, it is much more expoſed to miſrepreſentation than events of a more recent nature. But ſhould any Engliſhman, forgetful of the ſtrong and notorious facts which accompanied the breaking out of hoſtilities, and in ſpite of that predilection, which nature has implanted in the breaſt of every man in favour of his native land, have been prevailed upon to believe that this country was the aggreſſor in the preſent War, he is requeſted to beſtow a quarter of an hour in the peruſal of the following pages.

Should the Reader find the reaſoning here contained ſatisfactory to his own mind as to the queſtion of aggreſſion, he is requeſted to lend this pamphlet where he thinks it may be uſeful.

FRENCH AGGRESSION, &c.

May it please your Lordship: Gentlemen of the Jury.

THIS is an Indictment against the Right Honourable William Pitt, as Principal, and the British Parliament and British Nation, as Accessaries, in an offence the most atrocious and the most aggravated that can occupy the attention of a human tribunal—No less an offence than that of having wickedly engaged in an unjust and an unnecessary war.

The charge undoubtedly involves the Parliament and Nation, because it is undoubtedly true, that without their support and cordial approbation, the Minister would never have been able to effect his purpose of involving the country in war. But as I trust the Parliament and the Nation will be shortly disposed to renounce their connection with the Minister, and to abandon him to his fate, I shall pursue the charge against him alone, and I shall be perfectly satisfied if you, Gentlemen of the Jury, will pronounce your verdict against this "author of our present calamities."

Allowing for the difference between a Political Pamphlet, and a Speech at the Old Bailey, or the Assizes, it cannot be denied that Mr. Erskine's Publication is very fairly described, and might have been very consistently begun, by the above introductory address. It is undoubtedly his main object in that Publication to prove that Great Britain was the aggressor in the present war. For though in the course of the work he bestows a con-

ſiderable degree of attention upon the lamentable effects of the war and upon the various negociations by which we have endeavoured to bring it to a concluſion (taking occaſion from both to criminate ſtill further the Britiſh Miniſters) ſtill the foundation of all his cenſure is the charge, that thoſe Miniſters, encouraged and ſupported both by Parliament and the Nation *, unneceſſarily plunged the country into ſo calamitous a ſtate. Should that foundation fail, the ſuperſtructure which he has erected upon it muſt, of courſe, fall to the ground, and the numerous editions of his work will (at beſt) deſerve only to be conſigned to the duſty ſhelves of oblivion.

It may fairly be preſumed that Mr. E. has availed himſelf of all the evidence that could poſſibly be adduced, in ſupport of ſuch an accuſation. The abilities of the honourable gentleman are too well known to admit of a doubt, that he has diſplayed to the beſt advantage, and with the greateſt poſſible effect, every fact, circumſtance, and topic which could in any reſpect tend to ſubſtantiate his charge. He is not accuſtomed to neglect any thing within the ſcope of human ability, to inſure ſucceſs to any cauſe, that has the advantage of his aſſiſtance; and in a caſe like the preſent, where he ſtands forward under the impulſe of patriotic feeling, he may be expected to ſurpaſs, in zeal and exertion, the moſt diſtinguiſhed periods of his profeſſional life. Knowing, therefore, the ſide he has taken on this moſt important ſubject, I ſhould not heſitate to conſider the work before me as containing the moſt complete and ſatisfactory demonſtration, of which the nature of the caſe would admit, that the guilt of aggreſſion in the preſent war is chargeable on this country, through the influence of adminiſtration.

* That Parliament and the Nation are involved in the charge will appear from the following paſſage of Mr. E.'s work.

"The war could neither have been begun nor continued to this hour, if the great repreſentatives of the landed intereſt had not ſupported the miniſter who projected it." p. 64.

"The ſpirit which became *prevalent* about this time, and which bore down every thing before it, and *prepared the nation for war*, was an abſolute horror of every thing connected with France, and even for liberty itſelf, becauſe France avowed being contending for it," &c. p. 17, 18. 1ſt. edition.

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As far as miniſters are concerned in the queſtion, there is one general point of conſiderable difficulty and importance, on which Mr. E. has afforded us no kind of ſatisfaction.

Philoſophers (I mean thoſe of ancient rather than of modern times) admit that even in the minuteſt concerns of life, it is impoſſible to act without a motive—and ſurely the ſame rule muſt be applicable to affairs of magnitude. If, therefore, Mr. Pitt and his colleagues in office be juſtly chargeable with the exiſtence of the war, if they were determined, with an obſtinacy that nothing could reſiſt, to plunge the kingdom into hoſtilities, I ſhould have expected Mr. E. to refer their conduct in that reſpect to ſome aſſignable motive. I ſhould have expected him to ſhew that, while it was the obvious intereſt of the country to maintain peace, provided it could be maintained without ſacrificing the national honour and ſecurity, the intereſt of miniſters was oppoſite to that of the country. It was the more eſſential to ſhew this as, according to outward appearance, and judging from oſtenſible circumſtances, it ſhould ſeem that of all men in the country, miniſters, and particularly Mr. Pitt, had the ſtrongeſt inducement to avoid the war by all practicable means. Inſomuch that it is next to impoſſible to account for that predliection and eagerneſs for war, imputed to him by Mr. E. otherwiſe than by ſuppoſing him to poſſeſs ſo diabolical a diſpoſition, as to be willing to ſacrifice his favourite objects rather than loſe an opportunity of betraying the intereſts of the country, to which he is under inexpreſſible obligations. But Mr. E. has intirely omitted to account for this glaring inconſiſtency between the obvious intereſt of miniſters and the deſigns imputed to them. I do not however conſider that omiſſion as abſolutely fatal to the charge. The motives of human conduct are ſometimes concealed with ſo much art, as to elude the kneeneſt penetration, and they are often ſo perverſe, as to baffle all attempts to explain them in a ſatisfactory manner. Of this it would be impoſſible to adduce a more ſtriking proof than is to be found in the conduct of certain men of the firſt rank, conſequence and fortune in this country, whom nothing can reſtrain from purſuing ſuch meaſures as abſolutely

tend to the annihilation of their rank, conſequence and fortunes; notwithſtanding that they have immediately before their eyes the example of men, who, a little while ſince, were ſimilarly circumſtanced in France, and who, by the adoption of ſuch a line of conduct, have brought ruin upon themſelves and their country. Such a caſe would be deemed impoſſible, were it not proved to exiſt by the moſt incontrovertible of all evidence—the evidence of our ſenſes—and although we are at times induced almoſt to diſtruſt even that evidence, the proofs are ſo frequent and ſo glaring, that we are compelled to afford our aſſent to its authority.

In like manner it *may* have happened that, in defiance of all probability and even of all credibility, Mr. Pitt has been induced, by ſome ſecret and inexplicable impulſe, and without any neceſſity, both to engage and to perſiſt in the war, at the evident riſk of every thing that could be dear to him and the ſtate.—But in proportion as ſuch a ſuppoſition is repugnant to probability, the evidence to ſupport it ſhould be clear, direct and poſitive; and the exiſtence of a caſe ſo directly at variance with every rule of judgment, and with the uniform tenor of experience, ſtands in more need of the evidence of the ſenſes, than even the infatuation of ſuch of the nobility and gentry, as refuſe to take warning by the example and the fate of the Gallic reformers.

The firſt queſtion that preſents itſelf in an inquiry of this nature, reſpects the actual commencement of hoſtilities. The party who declares war or begins the attack, is, undoubtedly, *prima facie*, the aggreſſor, and the preſumption is in favour of the other party. This evidence, however, is not concluſive. A ſtate may be obliged to declare war, in order to redreſs an injury, for which, no reparation could be obtained by treaty. Thus in 1790, if Spain had refuſed ſatisfaction for the attack made by her on our ſettlement at Nootka Sound, we ſhould have been juſtified in declaring war, and in ſo doing, we ſhould not, ſtrictly ſpeaking, have been the aggreſſors. But there can be no doubt that the burden lies upon the party who firſt reſorts to violence to juſtify the attack, by proving that he had

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ſuſtained an injury, for which he had in vain demanded ſatisfaction. It is notorious that the evidence ariſing from the declaration of war is, as far as it goes, altogether againſt France, who in that reſpect was undoubtedly the aggreſſor againſt every one of the powers which have been engaged in this conteſt. But Mr. E. acting up to the character of an advocate againſt his country, has entirely overlooked this conſideration. Inſtead of giving ſo important a circumſtance its due weight, and acknowledging, as candour ſeemed to preſcribe, that he was bound to explain it by making out a very clear and ſtrong caſe of provocation in favour of France, and by ſhewing that ſhe had been injured by us and had no other means of compenſation than actual hoſtility, he argues as if the explanation were due from us, and as if, by ſtriking the firſt blow, we had incurred the neceſſity of juſtifying ſuch an act of violence.

It is, indeed, remarkable that not only Mr. E. but every one who eſpouſes his ſide of the queſtion of aggreſſion appears to ſhun, with the greateſt caution, all notice of this important fact, the *Declaration of war by France.* A fact which is deciſive of the queſtion, unleſs it be repelled by the moſt incontrovertible proof of previous injury and of refuſal of ſatisfaction. Had the caſe been reverſed—had Great Britain been the firſt to draw the ſword, would Mr. E. and his coadjutors have been ſilent reſpecting ſuch a circumſtance? Would they not rather have reſounded it in our ears, and preſſed it again and again upon our attention? would they not have called upon us to ſhew that we had been driven by neceſſity to ſo fatal an expedient, as the only means of maintaining our honour, and of vindicating our violated rights? But it ſeems that Great Britain is not to have the ſame meaſure as France; and that an act which, on our part, nothing but the moſt preſſing and abſolute neceſſity could have juſtified, our enemies and their advocates have no occaſion even to explain, while the reſponſibility which attaches upon ſuch an act is ſhifted intirely from them to ourſelves. But perhaps it may be contended that although Mr. E. has not taken any formal notice of the declaration of war, and of the commencement of hoſtilities by

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France, he has proved that thoſe violent meaſures were juſtified by the previous conduct of this country; and that the war, though actually begun by France, originated in aggreſſion of Great Britain. Whether or no this was the caſe, I am willing ſtill to admit to be the true queſtion in diſpute.

The only evidence which even Mr. Erſkine's induſtry has been able to diſcover in ſupport of the charge of aggreſſion adduced by him againſt this country, is the Correſpondence between M. Chauvelin and the Britiſh Government. But he relies with full confidence on this correſpondence, which he repreſents as abſolutely deciſive of the queſtion of aggreſſion. "This correſpondence," he ſays, "is ſcarcely known to, or recollected by the Engliſh public; its "authenticity is unqueſtionable, and the examination of it will place "the authors of the war in their proper colours." It muſt be admitted, indeed, that the correſpondence is a moſt material document; for it muſt be ſuppoſed to contain a full, if not a fair expoſition, of all the grounds of difference and complaint which exiſted between the two countries, and of the explanations which each had to offer in juſtification of its conduct: commencing in the month of May, 1792, ſoon after the arrival of M. Chauvelin in England, and being continued to the 24th of January, 1793, a very few days before the declaration of war by France, we may look to it with confidence for an enumeration of all the injuries, and of all the refuſals of ſatisfaction by which Great Britain impoſed upon France the neceſſity of appealing to arms, to obtain that juſtice which ſhe could not procure by way of negociation.

But what muſt be the ſurpriſe of any one who, upon examining the correſpondence with ſuch expectations, finds that it almoſt intirely conſiſts of explanations and excuſes on the part of France, in reſpect of the principles and proceedings, by which the new government of that country had excited the apprehenſions of the Britiſh government; and that it does not contain a ſingle demand of reparation of any injury received or pretended to be received from us, nor even any complaint of the conduct of Great Britain.

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I am not now inquiring what degree of credit was due to the explanations of France, with reſpect to her own conduct and views; this will more properly be matter of ſubſequent conſideration. But ſuppoſing that thoſe explanations were quite ſatisfactory, ſtill the correſpondence would amount to no more than an exculpation of France from thoſe charges which we had brought againſt her; and its total ſilence as to any wrong, or any affront received from us, amounts to the moſt complete demonſtration that ſhe did not find any thing in our conduct which afforded her the leaſt cauſe for complaint.

Indeed Mr. E. ſeems himſelf to conſider that the *main* point eſtabliſhed by this correſpondence, is the magnitude of the conceſſions made by France—conceſſions which, he ſays, "would ſcarcely be "believed, if they did not remain on record in the correſpondence." Now as it would be a contradiction in terms to ſuppoſe *conceſſions* to proceed from the *injured* party, it is at leaſt fair to preſume, that when France made conceſſions of ſuch magnitude as to be *ſcarcely credible*, inſtead of feeling that ſhe had any cauſe of complaint againſt this country, ſhe was conſcious, either of ſomething in her own conduct which made thoſe conceſſions neceſſary, or of ſomething in her views which rendered them expedient.

Whoever will take the trouble to examine even the parts of the Correſpondence ſelected by Mr. E. will find that the conſtruction which I have put upon this official communication is perfectly juſt and accurate.

The Correſpondence in queſtion may be divided into two parts by the ſhocking events of the 10th of Auguſt, 1792, when the French King, who had been but a Pageant of Royalty ever ſince the year 1789, was formally depoſed, and put into *cloſe* confinement. That part of the Correſpondence which was previous to theſe events, and which of courſe was carried on by M. Chauvelin in the *name* of the unfortunate King, related principally to the war in which France was engaged with the Emperor, and in which we took no concern whatever. The French Ambaſſador undertook to explain (as Mr. E. ſays) the cauſes "which had determined France to a war with the Emperor," and *he* made the moſt

"moſt ſerious proteſtations that *France would at all times reſpect the laws, cuſtoms, and forms of government of different nations.*" Proteſtations, which have been proved to be falſe by her ſubſequent conduct, and which, as we had then ſaid nothing upon that ſubject, would have been quite unneceſſary, if ſhe had not given grounds for ſuſpecting that ſhe intended to violate the rights of other countries. Another great object of M. Chauvelin, in this part of the Correſpondence, was to prevail on Great Britain to interpoſe with her allies to prevent them from affording any aſſiſtance to the Emperor in the war in which he was engaged in with France. A moſt unreaſonable propoſal, ſince, as we took no part againſt France, ſhe had no right to expect us to interfere in her favour, particularly as our doing ſo would have been a breach of our neutrality, and would, probably, have involved us in a war with the Emperor. And ſurely we were under no obligations to France to induce us to expoſe ourſelves to war for her ſake. Mr. E. moſt groſsly misrepreſents this application, by ſtating its object to be to obtain our mediation with the Emperor, to bring about peace with that Monarch. But inſtead of expreſſing the moſt diſtant wiſh for the termination of the then ſubſiſting war, France only deſired our intervention that the Emperor might be prevented from forming any alliances to aſſiſt him in a conteſt which the reſult has proved to have been extremely unequal even with the advantage of ſuch aſſiſtance. As yet, however, there is not one word that has the leaſt relation to the charge of aggreſſion againſt Great Britain.

Not having found in the firſt part of the correſpondence any evidence, nor indeed any complaints on the part of France, of any acts of aggreſſion or injury chargeable on this country, one is apt to look with confidence to the remainder of this official communication for a full diſplay of ſuch evidence and of ſuch complaints. But what muſt be our aſtoniſhment on diſcovering that, inſtead of pretending to detail any accuſations brought by France againſt the conduct of Great Britain, Mr. E introduces his extracts from this part of the evidence with the following obſervation—"and it appears

pears on referring to *it* that the charges made by *this country* to the *conduct of France*, were principally these:" On the first reading of this passage any one would suspect that there had been an error of the press, and that the compositor had transposed the words "this country" and "France;" but what follows proves that the language of the author has been faithfully conveyed to the public, and that the substance of the ensuing part of the correspondence related to charges, and to charges too of the most serious and weighty nature, "made by this country to the conduct of France."

I am very willing to refer to Mr. E's recital of these charges, which he has stated in a manner much more honourable to his candour than favourable to his argument. "*A meditated attack upon "Holland: and at all events, a violation of her rights, notwithstanding "her neutrality, by the proceedings of the convention respecting the Scheldt, "and the opening a passage through it to attack the citadel of Antwerp. "The French invasion and possession of the Netherlands; and the en- "couragement given to revolt in other countries, not only by emissaries in "this country, but by the decree of the 19th of Nov. which contained a "formal declaration to extend universally the new principles of govern- "ment adopted in France, and to encourage revolt in all countries, even "in those which were neutral.*"

These charges Mr. Chauvelin endeavoured, indeed, to repel; but for that purpose he could only resort to the most unsatisfactory explanations, and to general professions and assurances which were at direct variance with the conduct of France, and by which, it is plain, he endeavoured to amuse and cajole us. It is not at all necessary here to enter into an examination of his reply, because the question now is whether France had received any injury from this country which could justify her declaration of war, and not whether she could exculpate herself from the charges which we brought against her. As to that question, the latter part of the correspondence, in which M. Chauvelin appeared as the Minister of the French Republic, did not, any more than the former, when he was the Ambassador of the nominal King, contain any complaint whatever of

our conduct, nor demand any kind of reparation or ſatisfaction for any thing done by us. And as this omiſſion is abſolutely incompatible with the ſuppoſition that we had done her any wrong, or, in any way whatever, afforded her the leaſt cauſe for complaint, the correſpondence amounts to the moſt convincing proof, that the war, which ſhe declared immediately upon its concluſion, was entirely unprovoked by us, and that there is not any pretence to conſider Great Britain as the aggreſſor in that war.

Nor does Mr. E. after having travelled through the correſpondence, which he introduced by telling us that it would "place the au-"thors of the war in their proper colours," pretend that it contains a ſingle charge againſt this country. On the contrary, it ſeems to have produced on his mind the ſame effect which it muſt produce on every mind that is the leaſt ſuſceptible of candour, and to have convinced him not only that the conduct of France was unjuſtifiable in the extreme, but that the explanations by which ſhe endeavoured to juſtify that conduct ought not to have been confided in by us.

For after obſerving that he had adverted "to all the material parts of the correſpondence," he ſums it up in theſe emphatical words—"I deſire very diſtinctly to be underſtood that I am not undertaking the juſtification of the conduct of France at this period, though I ſhall ever think her more ſinned againſt than ſinning." (As this latter obſervation is neither ſupported by an enumeration of any offences committed by us againſt France, nor conſiſtent with Mr. E's ſubſequent enumeration of thoſe committed by France againſt us, it muſt be taken merely as mere aſſertion ſuggeſted by the previous impreſſion on his mind, but incapable of any kind of proof. He thus proceeds—"With regard to this decree of the 19th of "November, no conſideration can juſtify it: becauſe there is a great "difference between one nation giving PARTICULAR aſſiſtance to ano-"ther which is oppreſſed by its government, as K. Wm. did to Eng-"land, and a GENERAL PROSPECTIVE DECLARATION, SUCH AS "IS CONTAINED IN THE DECREE OF THE 19TH OF NOVEMBER, "and which became more hoſtile to the peace of other nations, as

"being

" being iſſued upon the eve of a great revolution, which naturally " affected the temper and feelings of mankind. Neither do I ſeek " to maintain that England ſhould have reſted ſecure from the ex- " planation of the other points in difference, as they are explained in this correſpondence, much leſs that ſhe ſhould have relied upon " the ſincerity of them, or the durability of French councils, to give " ſincerity its effect. Theſe are matters of fair political contro- " verſy, which I purpoſely avoid, but hazard the aſſertion, that " common policy and common ſenſe abſolutely enjoined that they " ſhould either have been made the inſtant foundations of war, " as aggreſſions which admitted no ſettlement, or the ſubject of " negociation upon terms conſiſtent with dignity and ſafety." P. 41, 42.

Thus, according to Mr. E. himſelf, the reſult of the correſpondence is—not that France complained of any injury from Great Britain—not that ſhe demanded any kind of ſatisfaction or redreſs—but that ſhe herſelf was chargeable with acts which " *no conſideration* " *can juſtify*," that ſhe was guilty of aggreſſions, which *admitted of no other alternative than to be either made the* " *inſtant foundations of war*, " *or the ſubject of ſafe and honourable negociation ;*" while the explanations by which ſhe attempted to juſtify her conduct were ſuch as to deſerve no credit for their *ſincerity*, and the councils from which thoſe explanations proceeded were not poſſeſſed of ſufficient *durability* to *give effect* even to *ſincerity* itſelf.

Mr. E. complains that neither of the courſes mentioned by him were purſued. " We neither made war upon theſe aggreſſions, nor " would we conſent to put them into a train of amicable negociation." It is ſomething to have ſuch an admiſſion that we did not adopt the moſt violent part of the alternative to which Mr. E. had reduced the queſtion ; as to the more moderate part, without pretending to know what ideas he may annex to the term " *amicable* negociation," the *correſpondence* certainly proves that the aggreſſions of France were made " the ſubject of negociation," upon ſuch terms as were alone " conſiſtent with dignity and ſafety," which is all that he declares to

have been neceſſary, in the caſe of our not proceeding at once to hoſtilities.

The truth is, that the Correſpondence, as it exiſted, was not only fully adequate to every purpoſe which the moſt formal negociation could have effected, by producing a ſufficient underſtanding of the ſentiments and views of each party reſpecting the matters in diſpute, but it alſo led to a communication of the *final* determination of the French rulers upon theſe matters. After having dealt in explanations, on the *ſincerity* of which Mr. E. does not pretend to ſay we ſhould have relied, M. Chauvelin himſelf ſhut the door to further diſcuſſion, by declaring thoſe explanations FINAL, and by announcing WAR, if we did not think proper, not only to be ſatisfied with them, but to repoſe in the perſons from whom they proceeded ſuch blind and implicit confidence, as to deſiſt from our complaints, and even to diſcontinue our naval preparations. " If," ſays M. Chauvelin, at the cloſe of the laſt note quoted by Mr. E. " the explana-
" tions of France appear inſufficient, and if we are obliged to hear a
" haughty language; if hoſtile preparations are continued in the Britiſh
" ports; after having exhauſted every means to preſerve peace, WE
" WILL PREPARE FOR WAR, with a ſenſe of the juſtice of our cauſe,
" and of our efforts to avoid this extremity: we will fight the Engliſh,
" whom we eſteem, with regret, but we will fight them without
" fear."

Such of Mr. E's readers as have never ſeen the Correſpondence otherwiſe than as it appears in his work, will, I doubt not, be ſurpriſed at his *omiſſion* of ſo important a part as that which I have juſt quoted, and they will find it difficult to reconcile that omiſſion with the aſſurance that he had " *adverted to all its material parts*," p. 39. But certainly the language here adopted by M. Chauvelin affords the fulleſt demonſtration that all attempts, on our part, to obtain further, or more ſatisfactory explanations, would have been no leſs nugatory than inconſiſtent " *with dignity and ſafety*." Was it poſſible for France to have taken a more effectual mode of convincing

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us that ſhe had no other explanations to give, than by declaring that if thoſe which ſhe had communicated appeared inſufficient *ſhe would prepare for war?*

That declaration was, however, *material* in another reſpect, for it held out to us the terms on which alone we might hope to avoid a war with France. It contained the truly important information that, in order to continue at peace with the French Republic, we muſt not only conſent to have the explanations ſhe had given, unſatisfactory and inſincere as they were, crammed down our throats, and to acknowledge ourſelves ſatisfied, when the *aggreſſions* of France had been aggravated by inſult and perfidy, but we muſt alſo have diſcontinued thoſe defenſive preparations, for which it was ſo likely we ſhould ſoon have occaſion, while France was endeavouring to bring all the force ſhe could command into action—when ſhe had already ſubjugated the Netherlands—and when ſhe was not only menacing Holland, but had actually violated the Dutch territory. But that is not all. At the time when we were thus called upon to diſcontinue our naval preparations, the French Miniſter of Marine, Monge, in a letter to the ſea ports, had announced the intentions of France to " fly to the ſuccour of the Engliſh republicans—to make a de- " ſcent in the iſland—to lodge there 50,000 caps of liberty—to " plant the *ſacred* tree—to ſtretch out her arms to her republican " brethren—and to deſtroy the tyranny of the Britiſh government!"

It muſt be acknowledged that the diſcuſſion has already produced a conſiderable effect. It has placed the ſubject on new grounds—The queſtion is no longer by what injuries or aggreſſions did Great Britain oblige France to declare war in order to obtain redreſs? no ſuch injuries or aggreſſions were even complained of, although a very detailed correſpondence took place between the Britiſh miniſters and the agents of the executive council of France, reſpecting the points in difference between the two countries.

It appears from the very evidence produced by Mr. E. that we have no *ſins of commiſſion* to anſwer for. But although that is amply ſufficient

ſufficient to juſtify the nation, it is not ſufficient to ſatisfy the refined delicacy of modern patriots; who, when their country is concerned, are ever ready to diſcover *ſins of omiſſion*, which they make equally penal with acts of the moſt flagitious nature. Mr. E. in particular burns with ſo pure a flame of patriotiſm that to ſatisfy him his country, like Cæſar's wife, muſt not only be innocent but unſuſpected. But when it is conſidered how many foul ſlanderers ſhe finds amongſt her own children, ſuch an expectation muſt ſeem quite unreaſonable. The charge, however, is now reduced to ſuch narrow grounds, that it does not relate to what we *have* done, but to what we have *not* done. I might very fairly decline an inveſtigation of this nature; for if nothing really hoſtile and injurious can be proved againſt Great Britain, ſhe is entirely exculpated from the charge of aggreſſion in a war, in which hoſtilities were declared and commenced by France. But there is really no better foundation for the *negative* than for the *poſitive* charge.

There is abundant reaſon to conclude that it was abſolutely out of the power of this country, by any means whatever, to avert the war. It has already appeared from the *correſpondence* that France would not continue at peace with us, except on terms to which no Engliſhman has hitherto ventured to ſay we ſhould have acceded. We were expreſsly told that to purchaſe peace, we muſt be ſatisfied with explanations, which were notoriouſly inſincere; we muſt ceaſe to complain, while our cauſe for complaint remained in full force; and diſcontinue our preparations for defence while the danger was faſt approaching to our very doors.

But in ſupport of the charge of neglect adduced by Mr. E. againſt the Britiſh Government, he aſſumes an hypotheſis of a very ſingular nature,—namely, that it was in the power of Great Britain to direct and controul the ſtorm which had burſt forth ſo ſuddenly, which had already produced ſuch dreadful ravages, and which menaced all Europe with deſolation; that an opportunity was afforded us, not merely of preventing the flames of war from extending to ourſelves, but of extinguiſhing them intirely, and even of reſtoring quiet and order

order to France itſelf. " This poſture of things (ſays Mr. E.) if " not wholly ſatisfactory, was certainly a poſture for amicable and " commanding ſettlement," and he afterwards aſſerts that we might have been the arbiters " of the repoſe of Europe," and have ſpoken with " a commanding voice to France, while her factions were " tearing one another to pieces."

To eſtabliſh an hypotheſis ſo obviouſly inconſiſtent with the events which diſtinguiſhed the period in queſtion, we might naturally have expected Mr. E. to bring forward circumſtances with which the public was hitherto unacquainted, and which would have proved, that there were ſome ſecret ſprings at our command, by which we could have given the political machine whatever direction we thought proper.

But inſtead of throwing any new light upon the ſubject, he returns to the Correſpondence with M. Chauvelin, and he reſorts to an argument to which I am confident no writer but Mr E. would have ventured to urge, in order to prove that the mediation of Great Britain might have been efficaciouſly exerted to preſerve or to reſtore the peace of Europe. The obvious inſincerity and the precarious authority of the French rulers (which had before been acknowledged by Mr. E.) ſeemed to preſent an inſuperable bar to all confidence in their profeſſions and aſſurances. But Mr. E. does not ſcruple to urge the above conſiderations as grounds for confidence and as motives for negociation. I will quote his own words, as I could not otherwiſe expect to gain credit for having conſtrued them fairly! " The powers that then exiſted in France, however inſin- " cere, or however unſettled in their authority, having proffered the " continuance of peace, and having aſked our meditation with the Em- " peror upon the renunciation of conqueſt and aggrandizement, and " upon the diſavowal of interference with the governments of other " countries, *we ſhould have taken them at their words.* The poſſible in- " ſincerity of the offer, or the weakneſs of perhaps an expiring faction " to give it efficacy, would have only added to the predominancy of

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" Great Britain," p. 47. Whatever any one may think of the juſtneſs of ſuch reaſoning, it is difficult to withold our admiration from the novelty by which it is diſtinguiſhed. If originality be a characteriſtic of genius, there never was a ſtronger proof of genius than is diſplayed in the obſervation that the inſincerity of an offer, would, if that offer had been accepted, have added to the predominancy of the party accepting it—To my poor underſtanding this ſeems to be preciſely the ſame thing as it would be to maintain, that to ſuffer ourſelves to be deluded by artifice and cajoled by impoſture is the ready way to defeat the machinations of the deceiver; and that the moſt certain mode of avoiding a ſnare is to throw ourſelves into the midſt of it. Mr. E. is, I apprehend, the firſt writer who ever repreſented perfidy as a ground for confidence, and after him I conceive no one will venture to aſſert, that, becauſe the powers in France were inſincere in their propoſals, and unſettled in their authority, " *we ſhould have taken them at their words.*"

It ſhould not however be forgotten that the offer, inſincere as it was, which according to Mr. E. was made to Great Britain of becoming " the arbitreſs of the repoſe of Europe," inſtead of extending even in *terms*, to " a mediation with the Emperor upon the renunciation of conqueſt and aggrandizement" went no further than a requeſt to prevent the Emperor from obtaining any aſſiſtance in the war in which he was engaged; if, therefore, that offer had been accepted, it would have had no other tendency than to enable France to aggrandize herſelf by the conqueſt of that Prince's dominions, and thereby to conſtitute *herſelf* inſtead of *us* the *arbitreſs of Europe.*

As a further proof that we loſt the faireſt poſſible opportunity, not only of preſerving ourſelves from the calamities of war, but of reſtoring peace to Europe, Mr. E. vouches the unſettled and diſtracted ſtate of France, which he contends would have enabled us to acquire a commanding influence over that country. " With what " a commanding voice might ſhe (Great Britain) have ſpoken to " France whilſt her factions were tearing one another to pieces, and " her Government could ſcarcely ſupport itſelf during peace," p. 46

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and again p. 48. " amidſt the tyrannies of quick ſucceeding factions the united force of this country and her allies, exerted upon ſuch a ſound principle, and thrown into the ſcale of any party in France that might have been willing to preſerve the peace, would have given to that party an over ruling aſcendancy." Am I really awake, or is my fancy roving in the romantic regions of an incoherent viſion, when it preſents to my contemplation ſuch ſentiments as proceeding from one of that party, which, during the whole war, has been raiſing an inceſſant outcry againſt all manner of interference in the domeſtic affairs of France—which has contended ſo ſtrenuouſly that the people of that country ſhould be left to ſettle their own concerns without any interference on the part of Foreign powers—and which has made it one of its moſt weighty charges againſt miniſters, that they were guilty of ſuch interference? Is it ſo diſtinguiſhed a member of that party as Mr. E. who aſſerts, that we ſhould have reſorted to intrigue in order to turn the ſcale of contending factions, and to have given an over-ruling aſcendancy to thoſe whoſe wiſhes were moſt congenial with our own? Before the war the Britiſh Government obſerved the ſtricteſt neutrality, and cautiouſly abſtained from all interference in the affairs of France, and ſince the exiſtence of the war, when ſuch interference became not only a right, but a matter of policy, and, indeed, of duty, that Government has only interfered (and I am ſorry to ſay too ſeldom and too ſcrupulouſly) in favour of the Royaliſt party, which alone could be ſuſpected of a deſire for peace, and which alone was friendly to the civil and religious eſtabliſhments of Europe, for the preſervation of which we were obliged to draw the ſword. But what a clamour has been raiſed againſt ſuch interference by thoſe very perſons, whoſe oracle, Mr. E. now declares, that *previouſly* to our being engaged in the war, we ſhould have ſpoken with a commanding voice to the factions of France, and by throwing our weight into the vibrating ſcale, had given to ſome one or other of thoſe factions an over-ruling aſcendancy!

Thus are we blamed, not only for having interfered when our interference was proper and neceſſary, but for not having interfered

when alone it could, in any reſpect, have been unjuſtifiable ſo to do *. And the tender ſolicitude which the Gentleman of the Oppoſition have manifeſted, on ſo many occaſions, for the independence of France, is of ſo very ſingular and delicate a nature, that though it would not allow of the ſmalleſt interpoſition in favour of the lawful Government, *during a war* with the enemies of that Government, it would preſent no obſtacle whatever to an interference *in time of peace*, in order to give an over-ruling aſcendancy to faction.

It muſt, however, be acknowledged that there is ſome generoſity in Mr. E's views on this ſubject. He would not have invaded the independence of France by the exertion of foreign influence, and than then have left her expoſed defenceleſs to her enemies. He would have exerciſed a *protecting* as well as a "commanding" influence in her favour. It is but juſtice to quote what he ſays on this ſubject. "If inſtead of inciting and encouraging the Princes of Europe to invade France, for the purpoſe of diſſolving her eſtabliſhment, we had become her ſecurity againſt their invaſions, whilſt her revolution ſhould be confined to her own limits and ſubjects, it is not poſſible to believe, upon any reaſoning from human life or experience, that Europe could have now been in its preſent condition." The charge which is here dragged in of *inciting and encouraging the Princes of Europe to invade France* is not only unſupported by proof, but repelled by the ſtrongeſt and moſt indiſputable evidence—the requeſt of M. Chauvelin to the Britiſh Court to ſtop the progreſs of the confederacy; § and the expreſs declaration of the Committee of General Defence, whoſe reporter, Briſſot, acknowledged that "the Cabinet of St. James did in fact obſerve a ſtrict neutrality till the immortal

* I am far from meaning to ſuggeſt that our interference would not have been juſtifiable before the war. On the contrary, ſuch were the original nature, tendency, and conduct of the Revolution with regard to other States, and ſuch was the univerſal danger with which it was fraught, that it would have been no leſs *juſtifiable* than *fortunate*, if all Europe had riſen at once to cruſh the monſter in its birth.

§ See page 8.

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day of the 10th of Auguſt." But laying that conſideration out of the caſe, where would have been the policy or the juſtice of our interfering for the purpoſe of ſecuring France againſt invaſions? What were the obligations that France had conferred upon us, what were the benefits we had to expect from her, that ſhould have induced us to any interference in her favour, particularly ſuch a one as would have been evidently inconſiſtent with our neutrality? She had attacked the Emperor, ſhe had invaded his dominions (though at firſt unſucceſsfully) the very moment ſhe had declared war againſt him: but all this is very well. Mr. E. does not pretend that we had any buſineſs to interfere to prevent *ſuch* invaſion, although the Low Countries have ever been conſidered as a bulwark to Great Britain againſt the power of France. Nay, when ſhe had afterwards obtained poſſeſſion of that country, and was menacing Holland, our near Ally, ſtill Mr. E. contends that it was no concern of ours. But when the Emperor, in his own defence, was preparing to retaliate, and, in conjunction with the King of Pruſſia, to invade France, then it ſeems that our interference became not only juſtifiable but neceſſary, and we ſhould have been *her ſecurity* againſt the invaſion of thoſe Princes.—Mr. E. has neglected to inform us how we could have juſtified ſo groſs a partiality in favour of one Power, which, according to his own ſtatement, far from poſſeſſing any claim on our gratitude, had merited our utmoſt indignation, againſt *other* Powers which had given us no cauſe for offence, one of which was our Ally, and whoſe intereſts were preciſely the ſame as our own. But it is particularly remarkable, that an advocate for peace ſhould recommend a line of conduct, which would have been a direct breach of our neutrality, and have expoſed us to a war with Powers, with whom we had no kind of difference whatever.

There ſeems to be no other way of ſolving theſe difficulties than by ſuppoſing that, in Mr. E's opinion, all conſiderations of juſtice and policy were ſuperſeded in favour of the new French ſyſtem of liberty and equality, and that war itſelf would loſe its ſting, if entered into in behal fof rebels and traitors. Mr. E. attempts, indeed,

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to qualify the *new political* ſyſtem of making Great Britain the guardian of France, by confining its operations to the time when the revolution of the latter, was, "confined to her own limits and ſubjects." But that time unfortunately never exiſted; for the Revolution was, from the firſt, univerſal in its principle and tendency, and it had, in *fact* as well as *principle* paſſed the limits preſcribed by Mr. E. before our protection was wanted, for the invaſion of the Netherlands preceded that of France.

The generoſity of Mr. E. for revolutionary France was not, however, to be ſatisfied even by our becoming her ſecurity againſt invaſions; this he calls merely "a *paſſive* and *preventive* influence." His friendſhip and compaſſion demand nothing leſs than that Great Britain ſhould have taken the Revolution itſelf under her immediate protection. "If," ſays he, "inſtead of this *paſſive and merely preventive* influence, Great Britain, in the true ſpirit, and in the full ripeneſs of civil wiſdom, had felt a juſt and generous compaſſion for the ſufferings of the French people; if ſeeing them thirſting for liberty, but ignorant of the thouſand difficulties which attend its eſtabliſhment, ſhe had taken a friendly, yet a commanding part; if, not contenting herſelf with a cold acknowledgement of the King of the French, by the inſidious forms of an embaſſy, ſhe had become the *faithful, but, at the ſame time, the cautious protector of the firſt Revolution;* if ſhe had put the reins upon Europe to prevent its interference, inſtead of countenancing the confederacy of its powers againſt it, the unhappy Louis might now have been reigning, according to his oath, over a free people; the horrors of ſucceeding revolutions might have been averted, and much of that rival jealouſy, the ſcourge of both nations for ſo many centuries, might, without affecting the balances of our mixed Conſtitution, have been gradually and happily extinguiſhed."

Leaving it to Mr. E. to reconcile this ſympathetic effuſion with the known ſyſtem of himſelf and his party, that it was a kind of ſacrilege to interfere in any reſpect with the French Revolution, I muſt confeſs that it is a myſtery far beyond my powers of comprehenſion, that a man of his loyalty, humanity, and religion—of his attachment

to order—of his reſpect for rank and property—of his reverence for the laws—ſhould have been diſpoſed to protect a Revolution, the principle, and the object of which were to eradicate every one of thoſe ſentiments from the human breaſt: a Revolution which, in *its earlieſt ſtage*, dragged forth from his palace the lawful Sovereign of France, a pious and beneficent Prince, whoſe wiſhes all centered in the happineſs of his people, and led him in worſe than ſavage proceſſion—loaded with inſult and mockery—preceeded by the bleeding heads of his murdered guards—to be incarcerated in his capital, and afterwards brought to a public and ignominious execution—A Revolution which commenced its career by maſſacre and confiſcation—by a violation of all the rules and rites of the national faith—by a perſecution of the Miniſters of religion—by an annihilation of all diſtinctions of rank—by a ſubverſion of the eſtabliſhed order, and of the lawful Government—and by an open and ſtudied contempt of all laws human and divine! Such was the Revolution of which Mr. E. contends that we ſhould have been the faithful protectors! Such was its original character—ſuch was the diſpoſition it diſplayed, ſuch the conduct it manifeſted, long before it could be ſuppoſed to want any protection; nay, when our proffered protection would have been conſidered as an inſult.

Mr. E. indeed admits that we could not without ſome danger, have meddled with ſuch a Revolution, even for the generous purpoſe of affording it protection. For he acknowledges that *caution* would have been neceſſary while we acted as its protectors. But as well might he adviſe us *cautiouſly* to take a viper to our boſom. And if we had, with all the caution in our power, accorded the protection claimed for the Revolution by its advocate Mr. E., inſtead of ſeeing the unhappy Louis reigning over a free people, it is more than probable that we ſhould have had to bewail the *judicial murder* of our own Sovereign, andtha t our own religion, laws, property, and ſecurity, would have been involved in a fate ſimilar to that, which France exhibited, by way of warning, to all ſtates, which ſhould have the folly and the wickedneſs to patronize her crimes, or to follow her example.

Before I quit this ſubject, I muſt beg leave to enter my proteſt againſt the doctrine, obliquely inculcated by our author in the paſ-

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ſage laſt quoted, that *it would be happy if we could extinguiſh the old rival jealouſy between England and France.* Inſtead of conſidering the extinction of that jealouſy as a deſirable event, I think it would be one of the greateſt national misfortunes that could befall this country. A jealouſy of France, which is a kind of native ſentiment in Engliſh breaſts, has been one of the principal cauſes of our proſperity. At this time it is eſſential to our ſecurity: and I can hardly conceive a more uſeful effort of patriotiſm than to cultivate ſuch a ſentiment. Nay, I go further, and do not heſitate to ſay that a principle of virtue, as well as a ſenſe of ſafety, requires us to entertain and encourage an *utter antipathy* to France, *as a nation*, until ſhe ſhall have renounced her accurſed Revolution, returned to the paths of ſocial order, and ſubmitted to the claims of lawful Government. I know how to reconcile theſe ſentiments with an active humanity in favour of the unfortunate individuals of that country, whom a moſt cruel perſecution has thrown upon our hands, and who have a claim to our aſſiſtance, not merely as men, but as the victims of a ſyſtem not more hoſtile (though *hitherto* more deſtructive) to them than to ourſelves.

Mr. E. ſoon afterwards reſorts to another proof of a very remarkable nature, in ſupport of his hypotheſis, that we had a fair and advantageous opportunity to interfere with the parties in France for the preſervation of peace. He obſerves, that "the ſhare which even Briſſot had in the commencement of hoſtilities, amidſt all the provocations to them, was the principal cauſe of his deſtruction, and the root of Robeſpierre's popularity, which enabled him to become the tyrant of France." I am glad to find that Mr. E. is apprized of the ſhare which that demagogue (Briſſot) had in the commencement of hoſtilities, and alſo of the important fact, that it was made a ſubſtantive charge upon his trial, that *he had been the means of involving France in a war with England.* The ſame obſervation might have been applied to Le Brun, who was tried on a ſimilar charge. The above circumſtance reſpecting Briſſot, which Mr. E. ſtates candidly and ſtrongly, by repreſenting it as "the principal cauſe of his deſtruction," would, I ſhould think, have convinced the honourable author, not only of the injuſtice of charging this country with the guilt of

aggreſſion

aggreſſion, but alſo of the perfidy which dictated all thoſe "*profeſſions*," "*conceſſions*," and *explanations*," on which he lays ſo much ſtreſs, and which were iſſued at the time when the main ſpring of the French Government was that *very* Briſſot, whoſe "*ſhare in the commencement of hoſtilities was the principal cauſe of his deſtruction.* If Mr. E. had duly attended to this circumſtance, which is of inexpreſſible importance in an inveſtigation into the cauſes of the war, I conceive that moſt of what he has written on this ſubject would have been omitted; and ſhould he loſe ſight of it in any future part of the diſcuſſion, I will take the liberty of recalling it to his recollection. At preſent I ſhall content myſelf with obſerving, that it by no means warrants the concluſion which he attempts to deduce from it—*that peace was at our command.* For the charge againſt Briſſot upon his trial was confined to his having involved France in a war with *England.* He was not accuſed of having excited *that* againſt *the Emperor*, although, in addition to other proofs, there was in exiſtence the evidence of his own declarations, that he had been principally inſtrumental in producing that war, in order to complete the deſtruction of the French Monarchy *.

From this diſtinction it is fair to infer, not that there was in any party a real diſpoſition for peace, but that, while the war with the Emperor had produced its deſired effect, the ſuppreſſion of royalty in France, it was found that the war with England had only removed to a greater diſtance the objects for which it was undertaken—that it had fruſtrated thoſe hopes of an Engliſh Revolution which the miſſionaries of ſedition deputed from this country, the Froſts and the Barlows, had inſpired—that it had diſappointed the friendly expectation of ſending addreſſes of congratulations to A NATIONAL CONVENTION OF ENGLAND, and, inſtead of promoting, had actually checked the progreſs of Engliſh ſedition, by depriving it *too ſoon* of the foſtering influence of French Fraternity—that it had alſo been

* "We made him declare war in order to put him to the teſt. But for "the war France had not been a Republic. It was the abolition of Royalty "I had in view, in cauſing war to be declared," Briſſot's letter to his Conſtituents.

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the means of reſcuing Holland from the moſt imminent danger, and of enabling the Emperor *(pro hac vice)* to recover the Netherlands—and that, upon the whole, it had been found extremely adverſe both to the ambitious and the revolutionary projects of France. No wonder, then, that it ſhould have become ſo unpopular, as to be made the ſubject of a criminal charge againſt Briſſot. But to infer from that circumſtance that it was unpopular in its commencement, or that, by condeſcending to intrigue with French factions, we could have reſtrained Briſſot from incurring that charge, is a ſtretch of reaſoning which can ſurely impoſe on none but ſuch as are determined to be deceived.

Mr. E. ſeems, indeed, to be aware of the extreme difficulty which would have attended any endeavours on our part to controul the furious elements which had been let looſe in France, and which menaced every civilized ſtate with deſolation, and he ſtates his apprehenſions in that reſpect in terms remarkably appoſite and expreſſive. "But ſuppoſing the practicability, or the effects of ſuch a ſyſtem in Great Britain, to be altogether falſe and viſionary; admitting, for the ſake of argument, that the agitation of the French revolution was too violent, and its principles, from the very beginning, too diſorganizing and miſchievous for regular governments, under any reſtraints, to have intermeddled with, or even acknowledged, nothing would follow from the admiſſion in favour of the war;" and ſoon afterwards; "France was at that time (according to the authors of the war) torn to pieces by the moſt furious and nearly balanced factions, which made her government a mere phantom, competent only to evil, and incapable of good. Be it ſo."

I was at a loſs to conceive how Mr. E., with all his ingenuity, could ſupport the aſſertion that nothing would follow from admiſſions like theſe *in favour of the war*. For if "the agitation of France and its furious factions was too violent" to allow even our "*commanding voice*" to be heard—if the principles of the Revolution were, "*from the very beginning, too diſorganizing and miſchievous for regular governments, under any reſtraints, to have intermeddled with, or even acknowledged*" (and this I contend to have been preciſely the caſe) it ſeems to me to follow that we had no means in our power to prevent

prevent hoſtilities; and that it is equally abſurd and uncandid to accuſe us of having neglected any thing for that purpoſe, ſince nothing done by us could have had any effect, when put in competition with ſuch powerful and indeed irreſiſtible cauſes of war.

Mr. E., however, is never at a loſs for expedients—and the one he ſuggeſts on this occaſion is neither more nor leſs than—NEUTRALITY. How ſuch a remedy was to produce effects which were out of the reach of our *all commanding influence*, it is difficult to imagine—But, ſuch as it is, we are fully intitled to the merit of having made the experiment. We waited with a patience more than human, until France thought proper to declare war and to make actual hoſtilities ſucceed to "aggreſſions" which we are now cenſured for not having made the "*inſtant foundations of war, as aggreſſions which admitted of no ſettlement;*" and I have ſhewn that we have the teſtimony of the Convention itſelf to prove, that we obſerved "an exact neutrality in the war which broke out between France, Auſtria, and Pruſſia."

Mr. E. does not ſeem to have ſatisfied his own mind reſpecting the ſpecies of neutrality which was moſt likely to be efficacious, in preventing a war. For he mentions two kinds, without informing us to which the preference ought to have been given. In one place he ſays that "a ſincere but *armed* neutrality on the part of Europe would have been the ſureſt, and the moſt obvious cauſe for diſſolving the new Republic, or, at all events, of recalling it the ſooneſt to ſome ſocial order of things."—And afterwards he declares that we ſhould have obſerved the moſt perfect and even the moſt *ſoothing* neutrality." For want of Mr. E's aſſiſtance in chooſing between remedies of ſo different a nature, we ſhould be much embarraſſed in making the ſelection, if it were not exceedingly clear, that neither the one nor the other was applicable to the caſe. An *armed* neutrality, was, indeed, moſt compatible with our own ſafety, but it was at the ſame time, much too rough an expedient to accord with the delicate and irritable nature of the French Revolution. This was manifeſt, as well previouſly to the war with the Emperor, as to that in which we were afterwards obliged to engage. For that Prince was required to

reduce his force in the Netherlands, although that force did not exceed its ordinary peace eſtabliſhment; and it has already been noticed that the reſult of the correſpondence between Lord Grenville and M. Chauvelin was an intimation on the part of the latter, that if we did not diſcontinue our naval preparations, France would prepare for war. But while an *armed* neutrality was thus totally out of our power, a *ſoothing* neutrality would have been no leſs inefficacious. He muſt really have great faith in political quackery, who can believe that this milk and water remedy could have counteracted the "*violent agitation of the French Revolution*," the "*diſorganizing and miſchievous nature of its principles*," and "*the fury of factions which made the Government competent only to evil and incapable of good.*"

It muſt, however, be admitted that, although Mr. E. perplexes us with a choice of difficulties, he ſhews the fertility of his own mind, by ſuggeſting ſuch a variety of expedients. In the courſe of a very few pages he preſents his readers with no leſs than three different ſyſtems; the *commanding* ſyſtem, or that of interference—the ſyſtem of *armed neutrality*—and the *ſoothing* ſyſtem. If, as a writer, he diſplays ſuch a command of means, as a miniſter, his reſources muſt have been inexhauſtible. But in the latter character he would have found it neceſſary to cultivate one quality which in the former he ſeems to think ſuperfluous—I mean *deciſion*. His deficiency, however, in that reſpect may perhaps be attributed to his ſenſe of the extreme embarraſſments which diſtinguiſhed the period to which he alludes, and which rendered it impoſſible for him to determine what line of conduct it would have been moſt wiſe for this country to adopt. In one reſpect only he ſeems to have made up his mind and to have formed a decided opinion—namely, that the Britiſh Government ought to be cenſured for every thing it did, and for every thing it omitted to do.

It cannot have eſcaped the obſervation of the reader, that the queſtion of Aggreſſion has been examined on the grounds, and according to the documents reſorted to by Mr. E. himſelf; and the reſult of the examination is, that France was the aggreſſor. What a ſtriking proof is this of the futility of the charge of aggreſſion which

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it attempted to fix upon this country! A man of Mr. E's. abilities, profeſſional ſkill and experience, undertakes to eſtabliſh that charge. He enters the liſts for that purpoſe—not as a mercenary—but as a volunteer. He comes forward under the impulſe of feeling, and, I doubt not, with a firm conviction that he is engaged on the ſide of truth. He brings into the conteſt all the zeal of which his ardent mind is ſuſceptible. He does not, however, give vent to that zeal in an impaſſioned ſpeech. He goes into his cloſet, and, with all the advantages of ſtudy and deliberation, he collects his materials, he ſelects his topics, he arranges his arguments, and preſents the public with the reſult of his reflections and labour.

But the moſt incontrovertible proofs of the guilt of France, and, conſequently, of the injuſtice of the charge advanced againſt Great Britain, though overpowered in his mind by the zeal of party, ſhine through the miſts of ſophiſtry which he has endeavoured to caſt upon them. His work is, in effect, and very contrary to his intention, an honourable teſtimony in favour of his country. He has proved that it is impoſſible to ſtate the queſtion, with any the leaſt regard to facts, without eſtabliſhing the juſtification of the Britiſh Government, and of the Britiſh people, both of whom he had accuſed. There is no occaſion to go into any defence. The caſe for the proſecution, though conducted by ſo able an advocate, affords the moſt complete refutation of the charge. The innocence of the party accuſed is manifeſt on the face of the evidence, collected by the greateſt ſkill and diſplayed by the greateſt ability, in ſupport of the accuſation. It would be a waſte of time to enter into other proofs. The Jury—the great inqueſt of the public—are ready to give their verdict without heſitation. They cannot, however, confine themſelves to a mere acquittal. Juſtice impels them to pronounce the charge as frivolous, vexatious and malicious, as it is unfounded; and the party, on whoſe behalf it was advanced, being arraigned at their bar, they declare him guilty, upon the evidence adduced by his own advocate, of the crime of which he had unjuſtly accuſed another.

The queſtion of Aggreſſion is thus, I truſt, for ever laid to reſt. I am convinced that Mr. E. will not think proper to meet the dilem-

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ma to which that queſtion has been reduced, and which, unleſs it can be got rid of, affords the moſt logical, and even mathematical proof, that FRANCE, inſtead of GREAT BRITAIN, was the aggreſſor. He will neither controvert the poſition, that the Declaration of war by France was a complete act of Aggreſſion, unleſs it was rendered neceſſary, in order to obtain ſatisfaction for ſome previous injury; nor will he venture to aſſert, after the inconteſtible proofs which he has adduced to the contrary, that any ſuch injury had been received or complained of by France, or that ſhe had applied to us for any kind of redreſs.

As little will he be diſpoſed to retract the conceſſions which his candour and love of juſtice impelled him to make, fatal as they were to his argument; and by which it is now eſtabliſhed on no leſs authority than his own, that even previouſly to the Declaration of War, France herſelf was chargeable with acts which *no conſiderate perſon can juſtify*—that ſhe was guilty of *aggreſſions*, which left us no other alternative than *inſtant War, or ſafe and honourable Negociation*—and that we could not ſafely repoſe any confidence either in the durability of the councils from which thoſe acts and aggreſſions proceeded, or in the ſincerity of the explanations and aſſurances which they gave reſpecting their conduct and their intentions. So complete an exculpation of this Country from a charge which had been often advanced by perverſe and factious men, and which, though intirely at variance with facts, had begun to acquire ſome weight from inceſſant repetition, ſhould warm every Britiſh breaſt with the moſt lively gratitude, to the learned author of the "View of the Cauſes and Conſequences of the preſent War."

After ſuch abundant proof of the aggreſſion of France, it does not ſeem neceſſary to ſwell this publication any further. The original work from which theſe extracts are taken, proceeds to diſcuſs a variety of important topics, ſome of which, though not eſſential to the inveſtigation of the queſtion of aggreſſion, throw conſiderable light on the cauſes of the War, and others lead to reflections of a nature peculiarly intereſting at the preſent criſis. In particular, the War is traced to the operation of the anarchy of France,

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by the application of this general principle, that Democratical Anarchy has a direct and natural tendency to the producing of *foreign* War—the French Revolution is displayed in its original character, and it is proved to have been, from its very commencement, and in its fundamental principles, essentially hostile to the Peace and security of other nations—the misfortunes of France are shewn to have been owing, in a great degree, to the irresolute temper, false lenity, and ill-timed moderation of Louis XVIth, and the fate of that unfortunate prince is exhibited as a specimen of the folly and danger of attempting, by compliances and concessions, to silence the clamours of faction, or to appease the rage of popular fury—the Statements of Mr. Erskine respecting the extent of the change of property in France, since the Revolution, are refuted, and the inference which he deduces from those statements of the stability of the French Republic, is further repelled by shewing that *that* Republic is composed of the most jarring materials, that it has no internal principle of union, and that nothing can hold its discordant parts together but the pressure of foreign War, which of course and from necessity, it will, so long as it exists, continue to prolong and to excite by all the means in its power—and finally, occasion is taken from a passage in Mr. Erskine's work to shew that the cause of Christianity is materially interested in the result of the present contest with the professors and promoters of infidelity, and Mr. E. is severely, but justly reprehended for his illiberal attack upon those persons, who, on account of the interests of Religion, have been alarmed at the success of the Gallic Atheists, who after overthrowing the altars of their own country, seek to erect their impious banners, wherever an altar is erected for the worship of the the true God.

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